

# Appendix II-A

## *Civic Engagement Process Summary*

DRAFT

## Key Engagement Activities

The following sections provide a high-level overview of the AMP engagement activities. More information on the participants and feedback received for these activities can be found in **Appendix II-B: Civic Engagement Findings Summary**.

In-person engagement occurred often and early in the planning process and resulted in quality feedback that informed the development of the AMP. Early in-person engagement also provided a strong baseline of information as the COVID-19 pandemic forced a shift to virtual engagement in early 2020 throughout the rest of the AMP process.

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### Visioning Process

The planning process began in June of 2019 and focused on the development of a vision and guiding principles for mobility in Alexandria that shaped the development and priorities of the AMP.

In order to develop the vision and guiding principles, the AMP Team launched a feedback form that received **over 800 responses**. This visioning survey encouraged aspirational planning ideas while recognizing the importance of prioritization. In doing so, the feedback form asked the following questions:

- What are three words that come to mind when you think about your ideal vision for mobility in Alexandria?
- What are the most important factors in how you choose to get around on a normal day?
- What are the most important opportunities for the future of mobility in Alexandria?
- What are the biggest challenges to the future of mobility in Alexandria?
- When developing a transportation strategy for Alexandria, we should focus most on...
- What things do you think Alexandria should invest in the most?

Answers and key words from the visioning feedback form informed the development and finalization of the AMP vision and guiding principles, with **safety, convenience, accessibility**, and **choice** emerging as major desires from the community.

In the summer 2019 visioning survey, we asked Alexandrians “What are three words that come to mind when you think about your ideal vision for mobility in Alexandria?”



# Innovation Forum

In October 2019, the AMP team held an Innovation Forum focused on how innovative travel options and technology will influence Alexandria in the context of the development of the AMP. The forum consisted of an open house-format with informational boards and an “Ideas Wall,” an overview presentation by City staff, interactive polling of attendees, and a panel discussion featuring local and national mobility experts. The event was attended in-person by 50 Alexandrians and nearly 250 watched the event recording via Facebook. The “Ideas Wall” prompted participants to think about the definition of innovation, how it should be applied to the Alexandria Mobility Plan, and ideas from other cities that Alexandria should explore. The ideas that emerged at the Innovation Forum were later tested in focus group meetings and draft plan strategies in advance of the draft and final AMP release.



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## Community Champion Meetings

The AMP Team hosted meetings with community champions to further solidify the direction of the planning process and partake in discussions with community leaders representing various organizations or constituencies. These meetings were held at various local businesses throughout Alexandria and featured informal, roundtable-like group discussions. Community champions also helped to disseminate information to their constituents throughout the planning process.

The community champion meetings helped inform the City's strategy for engaging and hearing from hard-to-reach populations, in addition to better understanding the unique needs of low-income residents and people of color in Alexandria. Some of the key themes expressed were connections to jobs and opportunities, connections between transportation and affordable housing, and safe and reliable transit.



## Stakeholder Group Meetings

City staff also met with several local and regional stakeholder groups throughout the planning process to inform them of AMP effort. Meeting attendees included the Alexandria Federation of Civic Associations, the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, the Eisenhower Partnership, the City of Alexandria's Bi-Weekly COVID-19 Community Response Group, and more.

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## Interdepartmental Coordination Meetings

Three interdepartmental coordination meetings were held at key milestones during the AMP process, including scoping, strategy development, and performance measures development, in addition to ad-hoc smaller coordination meetings on more specific topics. The following departments were involved:

- Department of Planning and Zoning
- Alexandria Police Department
- Alexandria Fire Department
- Department of Community and Human Services
- Alexandria City Public Schools
- Department of Information Technology Services
- Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities,
- Department of Transportation and Environmental Services

City staff from these departments were also given the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the draft AMP document. These meetings provided an opportunity for staff to share relevant initiatives and policies, helping to ensure that efforts are coordinated across City departments.

## Advisory Committee Meetings

The Alexandria Mobility Plan Advisory Committee (AMPAC) provided continuous input to City staff throughout the AMP process. AMPAC membership included representation from the Transportation Commission as well as the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Civic Associations, the Alexandria Commission on Persons with Disabilities, and the West End Business Association. Among other focuses, the AMPAC was provided with summaries of public and stakeholder feedback and worked collaboratively to ensure the AMP process was responsive and adapted to community feedback and needs.

The AMPAC met nine times throughout the course of the plan development process, with emphasis on the following topics:

- June 2019 – Visioning
- August 2019 – Vision and Guiding Principles
- October 2019 – Innovation Forum and Plan Organization
- December 2019 – Draft Key Performance Indicators
- January 2020 – Strategy Development (Streets and Supporting Travel Options)
- March 2020 – Strategy Development (Transit and Curb Space and Parking)
- November 2020 – Strategies and Plan Development
- December 2020 – Plan Development
- January 2021 – Preparation for Draft Plan Release

## Pop-Up Events

The AMP team held seven pop-up events in November and December 2019. These events yielded **over 450 unique interactions and conversations** with Alexandrians from across the city. Pop-ups were an effective tool for outreach because it enabled more residents and visitors to participate in the planning process who might not otherwise engage. It is important to hold events and meet people where they are in the city to get a more representative understanding of community sentiments, as opposed to requiring people to take time out of their schedules to attend a formal public meeting that may not be happening in their home neighborhood.

Pop-ups were held at the below locations across Alexandria.



## Priority Pyramid Activity

A ‘Mobility Priorities’ activity was promoted in November and December 2019 via the pop-up events, stakeholder meetings, as well as online. The activity prompted Alexandrians to select from a collection of ‘building blocks’ that represented components of the transportation system such as traffic management, pedestrian and bicyclist safety, and transit, and rank them in order of personal importance. The activity sought to replicate the real-world choices that must be made in transportation decision-making given constraints such as space, funding, and time. The identification of priorities, as well as the discussions and feedback that emerged from the activity, shaped the major themes of the AMP and helped to identify strategies that would address the top priorities of the community.

**Nearly 700 priority pyramids were completed** both in-person at pop-up events and in a digital version available online. These activities identified a range of community priorities and also helped spark conversation about major community needs.

### Mobility Priorities

Below are the ‘building blocks’ of a transportation system that provides choice, convenience, and reliability. Unfortunately, we can’t have everything we want – there’s not enough space, money, or time. What things do you think Alexandria should invest in the most?



**Attractive and Active Streets** – Utilizing streets as public spaces to serve different functions—providing places to gather and to program activities.



**Curbside Management** – Allocating space to balance the needs of and limit conflicts between parked cars, delivery trucks, Uber/Lyft, taxis, bicycles, buses, and cars.



**Reliable and Efficient Transit Service** – Providing convenient, affordable, and reliable bus service throughout the day and on all days of the week. Improving access to rail stations and regional bus stops.



**Incentives and Information** – Make it easier and more attractive to choose alternatives to driving alone.



**Mobility on Demand** – Supporting shared mobility (e.g., Capital Bikeshare, Zipcar, Uber/Lyft) with policies and infrastructure.



**Parking** – Increasing the physical inventory of on-street parking to taking action to manage the existing space better.



**Safe and Comfortable Places to Walk and Bike** – Allowing you to comfortably walk and bike everywhere in the city and improve accessibility for persons with disabilities.



**Maintaining our Infrastructure** – Keeping streetlights and traffic signals working, filling potholes, repaving streets, maintaining sidewalks, removing snow, and replacing aging bus fleet.



**Traffic Management** – Using technology to make travel in Alexandria safer and more efficient to get around.



Please choose your top six building block stickers and place them on your sheet in order of importance, from most important (top) to least important (bottom). Three of the themes will not be represented in the final pyramid.

### My Priorities

most important

more important

important



Email address \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)

What is your home zip code? \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)

#ALXmobility



## Focus Groups

Two rounds of focus group meetings collected community-generated ideas from an engaged audience to inform eventual AMP policies and strategies. The ideas collected were considered in the context of other inputs (such as City staff insights and best practices) and against the AMP vision and guiding principles. These focus groups helped test potential draft strategies in smaller group settings, enabling the City to refine ideas before taking them to the broader public. The ideas heard in the focus group meetings were collected, reviewed, crafted into draft strategies, and shared with the broader community at citywide engagement events for consideration for inclusion in the plan.

### Round 1

The first round of focus groups significantly influenced the **Streets** and **Supporting Travel Options** chapters of the AMP. **Six focus group meetings** were held in February 2020 and included **72 total participants**.

**Three additional focus groups** with **43 total participants** were held digitally in March 2020 to enhance participation and accessibility to the planning process.

### Round 2

The second round of focus groups sought to gain input for the development of the **Transit** and **Curb Space and Parking** chapters of the AMP. Three focus group meetings were held in April and May 2020 and included **14 total participants** in **three geographically-based groups**. Due to the continuing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, all Round 2 focus group meetings were held digitally.

## Virtual Town Hall

A live, virtual town hall event was hosted in October 2020 to present and discuss draft strategies for each plan chapter. The event included an overview presentation followed by a question and answer session. While the overview presentation only included a select subset of draft strategies per chapter, a full document of all draft strategies was made available online for public review along with a recording of the presentation. An online feedback form was also launched at this meeting, which was used to collect public input on support for draft strategies in advance of the draft plan release.

Based on public feedback on the draft strategies, the City sought to strengthen well-received and popular strategies, simplify language for strategies that were not well understood, and refine or eliminate strategies that were understood but unpopular and not tied to parallel City goals, policies, or plans.

More information on process, participants, feedback received, outcomes, and detailed summaries of each of these activities can be found in **Appendix II-B: Civic Engagement Findings Summary**.